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There were also the protecting rites of the life cycle, and Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and animist rituals to ameliorate events in every walk of life.

by instruction from a ritually[71] approached teacher. "One cannot accidentally learn. One has to ask to be taught." As a practitioner in this field, the title "mɔ̌" signalised expertise; where teaching was involved, the title was khrū (teacher [McF. 183]) or ʔāchān (professor [McF.990]). Speech was the key to this tradition, in spite of sacred books and wall-carvings in the temples.[72] Modern education, being book-and-teacher based, shared in this aura. There, even today, listening is more comfortable than reading.

Techniques of the practical, natural world were learned not by teaching but pragmatically by observation, example and experience. Eyes were the key. "I know because I saw," said a midwife. At the highest level of achievement in the natural world one was expert (nak), e.g. convict (nak thôt, an expert in being punished) a tourist (nak thîaw, an expert in roaming around).[73] Within the natural world, an intense pragmatism reigned always emphasising visual phenomena. People were keenly

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71. To speak ritually one held in the hand the trio of incense, flowers, and a candle. This was the way to cross over from the profane to the sacred world, to inform (bɔ̀k) or make a request of, a sacred being (a teacher, priest, king, or deity). The tiny flame of the offering invoked holy fire, and so had the effect of making one's words compelling, for no one could gainsay a request under such circumstances. A husband about to deliver his wife held incense, flower, and candle in hand as he requested the help of ancestors and spirits. (Bishop Pallegoix saved the existence of his mission by thus approaching the King [Pallegoix, Vol. 2:201]). The trio of offerings, whether at the 4 corners of the lying-in fire-floor, or in "hat phlī krathong" at a "thaw khwan" rite, or even in an ordinary khwan khan made all actions and words compelling.

72. Because words, immaterial and invisable, lay at the base of occultism, words as continuous agents of power permeated Bang Chan's ordinary daily life. This was why words, verbal play, and punning initiated action: pregnant women attended the monks' "coming out of retreat" (ʔɔ̀k phansā) so that the child would "come out" (ʔɔ̀k) easily.

73. It should not be forgotten that most activities in the supernatural world had their technical sides, and the term "nak" was used there too. A curer had to learn his herbs; a dancer, his steps; and a master of ceremonies, the words of the chants.

Despite the availability of fish and of vegetables in the canal, the highest cash outlays for family food occurred in this transplanting season. Several factors probably contributed to this: increased food energy needs because of long hours of work, venders again accessible because of high water, cash from sale of last year's crop still in hand, the convenience of cooked foods and snacks, and perhaps the need to replenish household supplies after the long drought, or after their depletion by a ceremony.

The two months of September and October during which the rice grew afforded some respite. People slept a little longer and breakfast was not prepared so early. The skilled cook might take over and could give more attention to food preparation. All who could, took the opportunity to visit and take trips. A few might go on a pilgrimage. Therefore, in this season, all family members were less often together at the evening meal. Fishing was a continuous occupation, with some preserving and home craft. Jobs such as selling food in the market were undertaken for ready cash; houses and equipment were built or repaired. Finally the threshing floor was prepared.

High water caused time-consuming inconvenience only in earth-floored cottages where it was necessary to keep the rice stores and chickens dry, move the cook-stove, and either build plank walks or cook standing ankle deep in water.

By November, the earliest varieties of rice matured. Those who owned several rice fields could put at least one into an early type. Many persons, by then short of rice, were glad to be thus tided over. One grandmother divided her first harvest among her several long-since-independent married children; 2 tangs[1] of milled rice per family, 40 for herself.

The heroic labor of harvest occupied December, January, and February. Farmers raced against the all-too-fast lowering of the water in the canals, without which sheaves could not be moved and buyers could not come for the paddy. People worked all daylight hours in the fields, threshed far into the night. At this time also many varieties of fish matured and men fished night after night. Just when the convenience of purchased food was greatest, cash was exhausted. With rice money in sight, venders might be generous with credit, but they could navigate only the larger canals, so were not available to many.

000 There was an important psychological difference between

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1. One tang equals 20 liters. Milled rice weighs about 16 kg. per tang.